AAAS Statement
On the human right to the benefits of scientific progress

The human right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications was first internationally recognized in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Basic tenets of the right include: ensuring equitable access to the benefits of scientific progress, with particular focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups; investing in R&D and creating incentives for innovation to address forms of suffering experienced by these groups; ensuring the freedom of scientists to engage in scientific inquiry while also conducting their work responsibly; and fostering international cooperation in science.

An international process is currently underway that will take into account different perspectives and diverse interests in defining with greater clarity the meaning of the right and in determining how best to implement the right in practice. Recognizing that this right lies at the heart of the AAAS mission and the social responsibilities of scientists, AAAS will pursue opportunities to collaborate with the global scientific community so that the voice, interests and concerns of scientists can be brought to this process.

Building on AAAS's strength as the world's largest multi-disciplinary scientific society and its unique contributions in bringing science and scientists to human rights work, AAAS will:

- bring to the attention of its affiliates and members the importance of engaging in discussions concerning the human right to benefit from scientific progress and its applications;
- engage the domestic and global scientific communities in defining the content of the right and determining its application to a diverse range of scientific disciplines and issues of concern to the scientific community;
- coordinate the efforts of the AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition to conceptualize the right and pursue strategies for integrating this right into the work of Coalition members; and
- building on these activities, engage the US government and other key actors in dialogue on the right to benefit from science and its implications for relevant policies and programs.

[*Adopted by the AAAS Board of Directors, 16 April 2010.*]